Guide for Associate Editors (AEs)

Your role

Peer Review Organizer. Safeguard the originality, scholarly quality, technical rigor, and reputation of EIPS. Invite at least two qualified, independent reviewers in relevant subject areas, monitor review progress, replace reviewers when necessary, assess the reports, and make a reasoned initial recommendation based on reviewer feedback and your own academic judgment.

On assignment

- Confirm that the manuscript is within your competence and that it shows sufficient originality, significance, technical soundness, evidential support, and overall quality to justify external review.
- Disclose conflicts and request reassignment when impartial handling cannot be assured.
- Keep the manuscript, reviewer identities, reports, correspondence, and deliberations confidential.
- Do not upload manuscript or review content to public or unapproved generative-AI or third-party services.

Reviewer management

- Obtain at least two independent, high-quality reviews whose combined expertise covers the central contribution, methods, and physical-system context. Invite additional reviewers when specialist advice or resolution of a material disagreement is needed.
- Select reviewers with demonstrated relevant expertise and no disqualifying conflict; verify identity, affiliation, publication record, and contact details.
- Avoid the same institution, recent or close collaborators, personal or financial relationships, direct involvement in the work, and other relationships that could compromise independence.
- Do not rely solely on author suggestions. Be alert to fabricated identities, reviewer rings, reciprocal reviewing, and suspiciously rapid or coordinated reports.
- Consider diversity of institution, geography, career stage, and perspective while maintaining the required expertise.
- Monitor invitations and deadlines. Replace reviewers who decline, do not respond, miss deadlines, disclose conflicts, lack expertise, or provide unusable reports.
- Record material actions and reasons in the editorial system.

Assessing the reports

- Check that the reports assess originality, significance, scholarly and technical quality, methodological rigor, results, reproducibility, presentation, and relevant ethical issues.
- Evaluate the reasoning and evidence; do not count reviewer votes or average recommendations.
- Resolve conflicting advice using your own academic assessment and the relative expertise of the reviewers.
- Seek clarification, replacement, or an additional expert if a report is superficial, abusive, conflicted, inconsistent, technically unreliable, or leaves a central issue uncovered.
- Withhold offensive, identifying, confidential, or clearly inappropriate text before transmission while preserving the substantive point.
- Escalate suspected misconduct, manipulated data/images, fabricated review, identity concerns, unethical research, or citation coercion confidentially. Do not investigate or make a misconduct finding yourself.

Initial recommendation

- Base the recommendation on your own reading and the substance of the reports. Recommend publication only when the manuscript meets the journal's standards for originality, significance, rigor, evidential support, clarity, and overall scholarly quality.
- Identify the decisive issues, reconcile conflicting reports, and distinguish required changes from optional suggestions.
- Choose accept, minor revision, major revision, or reject and explain why that category is proportionate.
- Ensure comments to authors are clear and actionable; do not promise acceptance after revision.
- Submit the recommendation to the Academic Associate Editor-in-Chief for checking.

Revised manuscripts

- Check the response letter and revised manuscript against the required changes.
- Re-invite original reviewers when specialist verification remains necessary; straightforward minor revisions may be assessed editorially.
- Avoid unrelated new requirements unless the revision reveals a material problem.
- Make a new reasoned recommendation through the same editorial check.

Annual Recognition — Associate Editors

1. Assessment and recognition

Each year, EIPS will recognize Outstanding Associate Editors with an official Certificate of Recognition. Annual assessment comprises recommendation quality (40%), timeliness (30%), and editorial workload (30%), each scored out of 100.

Overall score = 0.40 × quality + 0.30 × timeliness + 0.30 × workload.

2. Recommendation quality (40%)

The Academic Associate Editor-in-Chief will rate each recommendation for acceptance, minor revision, major revision, or rejection when reviewing it. Recommendations from different rounds are rated separately; clarifications or corrections within the same round are not counted again.

Assessment considers independent academic judgment, identification of key scientific issues, synthesis of reviewer reports, supporting reasoning, and clarity.

Score	Assessment standard
100	Excellent: Identifies the decisive issues, critically synthesizes the reviews, and provides a clear, well-supported independent recommendation.
60	Satisfactory: Addresses the main issues and provides adequate reasoning for an editorial decision; minor clarification may be needed.
0	Unsatisfactory: Major omissions, unsupported reasoning, or no substantive assessment prevent a reliable editorial decision.

Agreement with reviewers or the final editorial decision will not determine the rating.

Annual quality score = sum of quality ratings for all recommendations submitted during the year ÷ number of those recommendations.

3. Timeliness (30%)

Timeliness is assessed at two milestones. Deadlines use calendar days, with the day after the triggering event counted as day 1.

Milestone	Deadline and completion criterion
Reviewer acceptance	At least two qualified, independent reviewers accept their invitations within 14 days of manuscript assignment to the AE. Completion is the date the second reviewer accepts.

Milestone	Deadline and completion criterion
Editorial recommendation	Submit within 7 days of receiving usable reports that meet the requirements of the review round. For a revision requiring no further external review, submit within 7 days of assignment to the AE.

Any need for additional review must be documented and confirmed by the Academic Associate Editor-in-Chief. Each milestone is scored as follows:

Completion relative to the deadline	Score
On time	100
1–7 days late	60
More than 7 days late, or incomplete at the annual verification cutoff	0

Reviewer acceptance is counted once for each manuscript entering external review for the first time; the recommendation milestone is counted once per round.

Annual timeliness score = sum of scores for all milestones due during the year ÷ number of those milestones.

Extensions for reviewer-recruitment difficulties or other circumstances beyond the AE's control require approval from the Academic Associate Editor-in-Chief and documentation. Approved revised deadlines apply.

4. Editorial workload (30%)

A manuscript counts in the year when the AE completes substantive handling and submits the final acceptance or rejection recommendation. Each manuscript counts once, regardless of revision rounds. Administrative closures without substantive handling are excluded.

Annual workload score = 100 × min(N/T, 1), where N is the number of manuscripts completed during the year and T is the annual target, normally 10 manuscripts. The maximum workload score is 100.

For AEs appointed during the year, the target is prorated according to active service time. Other target adjustments must be announced before the assessment year.

5. Annual selection

AEs are ranked by annual overall score, with ties resolved first by quality and then by timeliness.

The Editorial Office will compile and verify complete records. The Editor-in-Chief will confirm recipients after considering manuscript complexity, assignment opportunities, and significant editorial contributions. Any departure from the ranking must be documented.

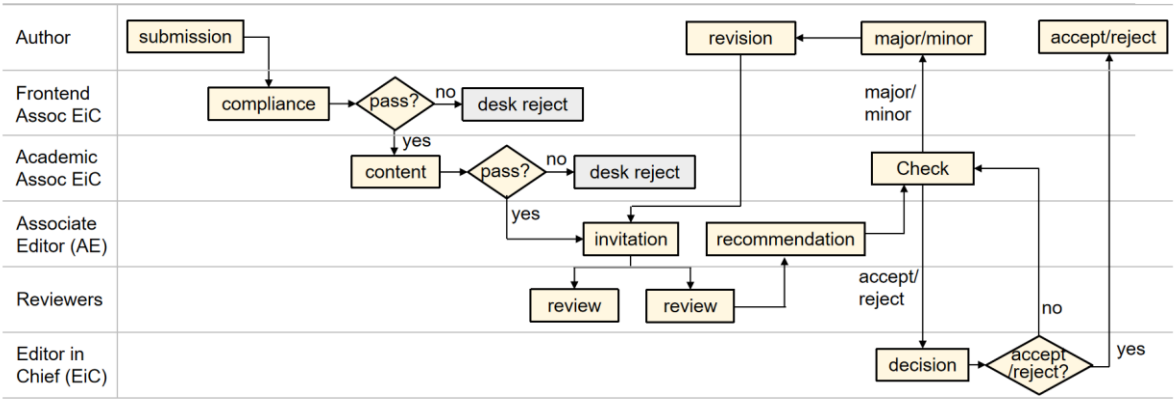
The assessment period is 1 January–31 December, with records verified by 15 January of the following year. Quality and workload are attributed by recommendation submission date; timeliness is attributed by milestone deadline.

Editorial workflow

Your responsibility begins after the manuscript passes academic content screening. Organize at least two independent, high-quality reviews and submit the reasoned “recommendation” shown in the journal workflow.

View the full editorial and peer-review workflow

Appendix: EIPS Editorial and Peer-Review Workflow



EIPS editorial and peer-review workflow.